

## For immediate release

### Songs from the Heart: A Concert for Canso

CANSO, NS – In 1990, the Town of Canso made headlines nationwide when the Atlantic groundfishery hit turbulent times. Now, Canso is facing a financial crisis that threatens the forced dissolution of one of Nova Scotia's oldest towns. The Stan Rogers Folk Festival is stepping forward to help the town by working with it to organize a mega-concert, April 24 at the Millennium Centre in Antigonish.

The Province of Nova Scotia has given Canso an ultimatum: balance your budget or dissolve. The people of this 400-year-old town are standing firm and striving to find solutions. Mayor Ray White leads a large and unified group of residents, businesses and friends of Canso who are mounting a fight for Canso's survival. In a recent plebiscite on the issue, 82% of residents voted in favour of remaining a town and seeking alternatives.

"This is not just about Canso. It's about standing up for rural Nova Scotia. Canso wants to be a town. They want to achieve a turnaround in their economy and being a town is critical to achieving this success. They want government to work with them to find solutions and not pull the plug after 400 years. This is what we elect governments to do. We want this concert to educate people about the real facts of the situation and give people an opportunity to stand behind Canso in demanding a solution," says White.

**Songs from the Heart: A Concert for Canso**, will bring together some of the East Coast's brightest stars for a wonderful evening of music and solidarity.

The four-hour concert will feature Newfoundland's 'Man of a Thousand Songs' **Ron Hynes**, Cape Breton songstress **Mary Jane Lamond**, multi-award winning Pictou County singer-songwriter **Dave Gunning**, MacCallum Settlement bluesman **Charlie A'Court**, Cheticamp multi-instrumentalist and songwriter **J.P. Cormier**, New Brunswick guitar-slinger **Matt Andersen** and Guysborough County's own **Carl Bond** and **Steve Wright**. A special multimedia aspect of the show will add to the evening, with supporters from all over voicing their support via technology.

"It's been incredible how supportive the artistic community has been. Canso is my home – and home is worth fighting for. I've chosen to bring up my three children in the same safe, supportive environment I enjoyed growing up here. There is no cause that is closer to my heart. I believe government has the ability and resources to work with us at the community level to turn around this situation. So many times we see government rally to support multi-national companies. This is one of Nova Scotia's oldest and proudest towns. Canso doesn't want hand-outs, they want a hand up. We have a strategy, we just need a focused and efficient response from federal and provincial partners. The

-MORE-

festival is a testament to the integrity and determination of the people here.” says festival Artistic Director Troy Greencorn, who has volunteered to produce the concert.

St. Francis Xavier University and a whole host of businesses in the region have been incredibly supportive and are on board as sponsors. The concert and other fundraisers are profiled on a special website called [www.friendsofcanso.com](http://www.friendsofcanso.com). Funds raised will be used to create a Turnaround Fund, which will be used to fund the lobby necessary to resolve the current stalemate, and to fund the community’s economic development efforts.

“I’m hopeful that this project will make it clear to government that we need them to work side-by-side with us to craft a turnaround plan. Amalgamation is not the low-cost alternative, nor is it what the community decided in the January plebiscite. There are other solutions, and the people of our region need to know that. Our community has been extremely important in the economy of Eastern Nova Scotia for many years. This is a chance for those communities to show their support for us. We hope people get angry and voice this anger to their elected officials. Let’s demand better for rural Nova Scotia.” states Concert Chairperson Buzz Lumsden, Deputy Mayor of Canso.

Concert is April 24<sup>th</sup>. Show starts at 6:00 P.M. Tickets are \$ 19.50 in advance (plus tax and fees). They go on sale Monday at the Millennium Centre in Antigonish. For tickets phone 902-867-3304 or 1-866-259-8169.

-30-

For more information:

Ray White  
Mayor, Town of Canso  
(902) 366-2785

Buzz Lumsden  
Concert Chairperson  
(902) 366-2261

Troy Greencorn  
Producer, Songs from the Heart: A Concert For Canso  
(902) 366-2956